

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

**Remarks on the Downing of a Chinese Spy Balloon by United States Military Forces
and an Exchange With Reporters in Hagerstown, Maryland**

February 4, 2023

The President. On Wednesday, when I was briefed on the balloon, I ordered the Pentagon to shoot it down, on Wednesday, as soon as possible. They decided—without doing damage to anyone on the ground. They decided that the best time to do that was as it got over water, outside—within our—within the 12-mile limit.

They successfully took it down. And I want to compliment our aviators who did it. And we'll have more to report on this a little later.

Thank you.

Q. Your saying the recommendation was from the Pentagon?

Q. Mr. President, what does this say about China?

Q. [Inaudible]—the Chinese?

Q. What's your message to China?

U.S. Decision To Shoot Down the Chinese Spy Balloon

Q. You were saying the recommendation from your—was from your national security——

The President. I told them to shoot it down.

Q. On Wednesday?

The President. On Wednesday.

Q. But the recommendation from them——

The President. They said to me, "Let's wait till the safest place to do it."

Q. What does this mean for China—relations with China?

Q. Are you worried about provoking the Chinese, sir?

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. on the tarmac at Hagerstown Regional Airport upon arrival from Syracuse, NY.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Chinese spy balloon, downing by U.S. military forces;
Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Hagerstown, MD.

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